

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01  
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 /096 W  
-----050519Z 130564 /11

R 041605Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4699  
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
/AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO 246  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY SANA  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMCONSUL DJIBOUTI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 7598

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR XF FT ET FR  
SUBJ: ARAB LEAGUE OBSERVERS FOR DJIBOUTI

1. EMBOFF HAD OPPORTUNITY MAY 4 TO DISCUSS TFAI QUESTION  
WITH ARAB LEAGUE AFRICAN DEPT DEPDIRECTOR 'ALI ABU SINN,  
WHO ACCOMPANIED AL ASST SYG MUHAMMAD AL-FARRA ON LATE  
APRIL FACT-FINDING MISSION TO DJIBOUTI. ABU SINN (SUDANESE)  
COMMENTED THAT FACT-FINDING MISSION HAD BEEN ORDERED BY  
AL COUNCIL BECUASE OF SOMALI (BACKED BY KUWAIT AND IRAQ)  
FEARS THAT FRENCH MANEUVERING VIA "UNNECESSARY" REFERENDUM  
ON INDEPENDENCE AND OFFICIAL AL OBSERVER MISSION FOR  
BALLOTING MIGHT GIVE AL WEIGHT TO FRENCH MACHINATIONS TO  
REMAIN IN TFAI. ABU SINN NOTED THAT HE AND AL-FARRA HAD  
BEEN FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY FRENCH PREPARATIONS FOR REFER-  
ENDUM/ELECTIONS AND SEVEN-MAN AL OBSERVER MISSION WILL  
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DEPART CAIRO MAY 6 FOR DJIBOUTI. MEMBERS: CHIEF, AL-FARRA;  
MAMDUH AZZAM, CHIEF OF AL LEGAL DEPT; ABD AL-RAZZAQ 'UMAYYIR  
(LIBYAN), CHIEF OF ARAB AFFAIRS DEPT; MU'AZZ AL-'AZAM,  
DEPT. INFO; FUTUH SHARIF, AFRICAN DEPT; AHAMD HAYKAL, TRANSLATER,  
AND ONE SECRETARY.

2. ABU SINN NOTED THAT AL COUNCIL SESSION MAY 3 WHICH

APPROVED OBSERVER MISSION HAD BEEN RELATIVELY STORMY, SINCE SOMALIS AND THEIR IRAQI ALLIES HAD CONTINUOUSLY TRIED TO BRING UP BROADER HORN OF AFRICA SUBJECTS (SUCH AS ERITREA) WHILE EGYPTIANS AND SUDANESE DOGGEDLY MAINTAINED THAT ONLY ISSUE UNDER DEBATE WAS APPROVAL OF OBSERVERS. LATTER VIEW PREVAILED.

3. CONCLUSIONS OF FARRA/ABU SINN MISSION. ABU SINN NOTED THAT 'ALI AREF HAD APPARENTLY LOST CONSIDERABLE GROUND IN PAST FEW WEEKS, NOT ONLY BECAUSE HE RALLIED TOO LATE TO RNI TO HAVE HAND IN DRAWING UP UNIFIED ELECTORAL LIST, BUT ALSO BECUASE THERE INCREASING CONVICTION IN DJIBOUTI THAT ALI AREF MAKING SECRET TRIPS TO ADDIS ABABA TO COORDINATE STRATEGY WITH EPMG. AL FACT FINDERS WERE STRUCK THAT ALI AREF, MPL, AND MLD POSITIONS ALL APPREARED COORDINATED IN ADVANCE (AFAR POLITICS MADE IN ETHIOPIA) AND CONCLUDED THAT ALI AREF, DESPITE BELATED SUPPORT FOR UNIFIED LIST, HAD LOST CONSIDERABLE FACE, SINCE HE HAD EARLIER VOWED TO SELECT PERSONALLY ALL AFARS ON UNITY LIST.

4. AFAR LEADERSHIP. ABU SINN OPINED THAT "REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI" PRIME MINISTERSHIP NOW TOSS-UP BETWEEN AHMAD DINI AND ABDALLAH KAMIL. TO AL OBSERVERS, KAMIL IN STRONGER POSITION, SINCE HE HAD HAD INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN SELECTING AFAR MEMBERS OF UNIFIED LIST AND WOULD THUS COMMAND CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT IN NEW PARLIAMENT. DINI, ON OTHER HAND, HAD GAINED CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT AMONG POPULATION AT LARGE AS ONE OF FIRST SERIOUS AFAR CHALLENGERS TO CORRUPT RULE OF ALI AREF, BUT MANY AFARS RESENTED DINI ADHERENCE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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LARGELY ISSA LPAI. ABU SINN THOUGHT KAMIL HAD EDGE FOR PM, WITH DINI AS LIKELY FONMIN.

5. FRENCH ROLE IN INDEPENDENCE. ABU SINN OPINED THAT AL MEMBERS NOW VIRTUALLY UNANIMOUS THAT FRENCH FORCE WOULD STAY IN DJIBOUTI FOR LIMITED PERIOD (ONE-TWO YEARS) AFTER INDEPENDENCE TO GUARANTEE INTERNAL STABILITY AND TO TRAIN SECURITY FORCES. AL MEMBERS, AND EVEN TACITLY SOMALIA, NOW CONVINCED OF FRENCH GOOD INTENTION AND ONLY DISSENTING VOICE LIKELY TO BE PDRY. AL FACT-FINDERS HAD HEARD THAT 8,000-MAN SECURITY FORCE WOULD BE REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN STABILITY AFTER INDEPENDENCE: 4,000-MAN FRENCH TRAINING MISSION AND 4,000-MAN LOCAL SECURITY CONTINGENT. FRENCH WOULD PHASE OUT AS LOCAL MANPOWER REPLACED THEM.

6. ETHIOPIAN THREAT. AL MISSION REMAINED DISTURBED AND PUZZLED BY ETHIOPIAN INTENTIONS RE DJIBOUTI, ALTHOUGH THEY CONCLUDED THAT, GIVEN ALI AREF SUPPORT OF UNIFIED LIST, ONLY MPL REPRESENTED SERIOUS DISRUPTIVE THREAT TO POST-

INDEPENDENCE STABILITY IN SHORT RUN. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, ABU SINN BELIEVED THAT TFAI FACTIONS HAD SPENT FAR TOO MUCH TIME WORRYING ABOUT OUTSIDE FORCES (SOMALIA, ETHIOPIA, USSR) AND TOO LITTLE ABOUT INTERNAL DIVISIONS, WHICH COULD IN END RUIN ENTIRE EXPERIMENT. ABU SINN CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT AL EXPECTED DJIBOUTI TO JOIN UN, OAU, AND AL SIMULTANEOUSLY AFTER INDEPENDENCE.

7. COMMENT: FRENCH EMBASSY COUNSELOR LAUGEL HAS NOTED TO EMBOFFS THAT FRENCH HIGHLY PLEASED WITH RESULTS FARRA/ABU SINN MISSION. HIGH COMMISSIONER D'ORNANO APPARENTLY CONVINCED AL REPS OF DANGER OF MOVING TOO FAR AFIELD AROUND TERRITORY AND ALL TFAI POLITICAL LEADERS THUS CAME TO HOTEL ROOMS, WHERE FARRA/ABU SINN REMAINED. AL REPS APPARENTLY FELT THAT THEY AT LEAST IN PART RESPONSIBLE FOR ALI AREF'S BELATED SUPPORT OF UNIFIED LIST, WHICH GIVE ENTIRE VISIT POSITIVE AURA. FRENCH NOW POSITIVE  
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CONCERNING CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE WHICH AL OBSERVERS CAN PLAY DURING REFERENDUM (NONE OF OBSERVER DELEGATIONS SEEN AS TROUBLE-MAKER) AND LAUGEL COMMENTED THAT FRANCE REALIZES THAT AL NOT OPPOSED TO RESIDUAL FRENCH TRAINING FORCE AFTER DJIBOUTI INDEPENDENCE. LAUGEL NOTED THAT SMALL CONTRETEMPS HAD ARISEN WHEN D'ORNANO HAD INFORMED AL-FARRA THAT AL COULD OBSERVE REFERENDUM, BUT NOT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (WHICH AL-FARRA CHARACTERIZED AS UNACCEPTABLE), BUT AFFAIR CLEARED UP IN PARIS, WHERE AL-FARRA ASSURED THAT AL OBSERVERS MIGHT WATCH ENTIRE BALLOTING PROCESS. LAUGEL STATED THAT GOF PERCEIVES DJIBOUTI MEMBERSHIP IN AL AFTER INDEPENDENCE AS GOOD REIN ON FUTURE SOMALI AMBITIONS, ALTHOUGH ETHIOPIA REMAINED PRINCIPAL QUESTION MARK.  
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## Message Attributes

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